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UNCLE SAM KNOWS TOO MUCH

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Spies Lobby Congress for Constitutional Rights

By WILLARD EDWARDS

(Chicago Tribune Service)
WASHINGTON (Advance)—
The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the nation's most mysterious spy network, have been prowling Capitol Hill, engaging in furtive conferences with senators and whispering to influential staff members.
Since the CIA is supposed to concern itself only with foreign espionage operations, such activity hints at some sensational purpose. Was a member of Congress, perhaps, in touch with a foreign government? Had Communist agents penetrated a house or senate committee?

Closure of a more prosaic explanation: The CIA has been busy in the great American game of lobbying. It is exerting all its efforts to defeat legislation which would give its employees some basic constitutional rights. Every spy story fan knows, of course, that a spy has no rights, constitutional or otherwise. He serves under a warning that his country will disavow him if he is caught. He is a slave to the bidding of a cold-eyed tyrannical chief, given some such code name as "M" or "K", who sends him out to kill or be killed while stealing secrets from the enemy. Only an occasional bout

of an investigation permits dis- with some long-term rights. This fictional concept is not too far from reality. There is no question that secret agents must abandon the right to personal privacy. Government intelligence agencies compile detailed records on their employees, exploring their lives from the time of birth. The customary justification for prying is an understandable concern about penetration by enemy agents.

The same excuse cannot be made by other government agencies, but Congress found that "big brotherism" in the Johnson administration included an insatiable curiosity about

lives of all federal employees, now close to 3,400,000. Young women secretaries have been forced to reveal their sex experiences, before and after marriage, and are asked what they dream about and whether they love their mothers. Men applicants for employment have been strapped into lie-detecting machines and sim- ilarly quizzed. The federal thirst for knowledge seemed to be concentrated on the sex habits and religious beliefs of workers of both sexes.

The Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on constitutional rights, after a two-year study, voted unanimously to report a bill protecting government employees from unwarranted intrusion on their privacy. Certain exemptions were granted the CIA in emergency cases affecting national security, but the agency was obviously not satisfied and began lobbying for a blanket exemption.

Sponsored by more than 50 Senators, the bill was brought up in the Senate this week for certain approval. Suddenly, Sen. Mike Mansfield (D., Mont.), the majority leader, postponed its consideration until Sept. 19. He admitted that the CIA had made a last-minute

request for the delay. In his 24 years in Congress, he had never heard of such a demand from a federal agency, he said, but he had granted it to give the agency more time to outline its objections.

Sen. Sam J. Ervin (D., N.C.), the bill's author, raged the CIA had refused for two years to make public its objections. He said it only wanted the unmitigated right to kick its employees around." Ervin noted the testimony of a witness who had told him experiences in seeking employment as a CIA agent.